3:Chao E-5 (1939-1941)1948 AF12 North China AF12

P'ing-chiao-tsun is the pseudo-name given to our village, the real name of which is for a certain purpose better disguised. It is chosen as our field of investigation not because it is a good sample. When so little is known of the social conditions of the various regions in China, it is very difficult indeed to speak of sampling in any sociological study. The present village is chosen for its location, which is not too far away from the university campus or too near to be influenced by a single institution. It is chosen even more because the principal of its school is an old acquaintance of one of our department assistants.

Back in the days in the year of 1930-31 when the Department of Sociology and Social Work of Yenching University first established its Ch'ingho Social Experimental Station, P'ing-chiao-tsun was known to us. When the Ch'ingho Station withdrew what was left of its work from the village some time in 1935, the Department of Sociology of National Tsinghua University established its field station in this village until the summer of 1937. The villagers and their leaders had been thus quite prepared for any sociological investigation from the outside when we "rediscovered" the village in one of our field trips in the winter of 1938-39.

We had been looking for a new field ever since the Ch'ingho Station was closed down in 1937. It was, however, only by accident that we met the school principal and decided to have the village as our sociological field. Negotiations with the principal and through him with the village leaders were very laborious in the days from February 1939 to June of the same year. As we finally agreed to subsidize the school, we were led by the principal to meet the head of the *lien-pao* in his office in another village. A meeting with the *pao* and *chia* heads, leaders of our village, was arranged in July, 1939. Faculty- and student-investigators all participated. After all these courtesy calls we were led to visit homes of villagers who were very friendly to our chief informant and "liaison officer", the principal of the village school. In these early visits we tried to be friends to our villagers and engaged them in conversation whenever possible. Finally to conclude our preparatory work, the heads of the *lien-pao*, *pao* and *chia* were invited to lunch and to visit the university campus and university agriculture experimental station in October, 1939.

In early August in 1939 a group of physics students of the university was requested to assist in the mapping out of the physical site of the village. It was a real excitement to the village folks when these students together with our field investigators had their instru-

3:Chao E-5 (1939-1941)1948 AF12 North China AF12

ments in position in the village to start working. This was the first time that our village folks had a taste of the accuracy of modern scientific instruments. It was real magic to them, so they told us, when they found out that the distances established by these instruments were "equal" to the measures by their foot-steps.

While our village folks were still startled by this scientific mapping, a population census including age, sex, occupation, literacy and other items was begun. The method of direct inquiry was adopted whenever possible and the census unit was a family-household. Here our investigators met their first difficulty. Villagers refused to answer when they were asked. Naturally, our house-to-house canvass began with those families which were very friendly to the school principal. Whenever we were refused, our "liaison officer" explained the matter and said "uncle-so-and-so's family had already been enumerated." The indirect method, i.e., inquiring from neighboring families, was resorted to whenever direct inquiry failed us. When all enumerations were done, our figures were found to have discrepancies with the household records on file in the office of the *lien-pao* head.

Registration of births, deaths, marriages, and migrations soon followed the census enumeration. The work was done by the principal and every registration was checked by our field investigators. This work has been continuing for already more than two years.

Following the lead of social anthropologists, events of interest were begun to be recorded daily. We have on file at present the records of over 800 days. Meteorological data were provided by the Department of Physics of the University. Agricultural, economic, political, religious, educational and recreational activities as well as customs relating to births, marriages, deaths and health were altogether recorded in one blank-sheet. With these records from day to day, various aspects of life can be well correlated and their rhythms are well observed and noted.

At the very beginning of our investigations, it was found very necessary to have a chance for field investigators to exchange their experiences and to discuss their common problems. This was made possible by group conferences held weekly. Furthermore, each investigator was asked to record his observations as well as his own activities. All these records were on file for references. Besides, student-investigators were having frequent conferences with their major professors to clear up matters of theoretical and practical interest.

3:Chao E-5 (1939-1941)1948 AF12 North China AF12

Shortly before the end of October, 1939 student-investigators gradually concentrated on certain aspects of social life. While these students only visited the village twice a week when school was in session, they spent their whole winter recess of two weeks with the villagers. The subjects covered by these student-investigators included demography, sexual life, death customs, village politics, farm management, and land tenure, with the latter two by students from the Economics Department.

About the same time when village folks began to have more leisure time in the winter months, our department assistants started a rather detailed census of the farming population with the family-household as unit of investigation. Items covered in seven blank-schedules included farm-size, land ownership, working animals, material equipments, croppings, farm-laborers, debts, etc. — altogether well over three hundred sub-items. The main purpose of this study is the correlation of economic activities with the various aspects of social relations.

In filling up these blanks, we started with the material equipments and had the more delicate questions of land ownership and debts at the end. In our house-to-house canvasses we still met difficulties, but they were far less than those we met in taking the population census undertaken earlier, although these blanks were far more complicated and involved than the population schedule.

Before the end of the academic year, June, 1940, students of the junior class were sent to the field and served as apprentices to their seniors. These students were only expected to make acquaintances with the villagers. While they were not supposed to take up any subject for study, they were required to keep records of their own activities in the village as well as their observations. It was very interesting indeed to compare these records with the early records of their seniors.

Shortly before the commencement of a new year, misunderstandings occurred between our investigators and the villagers. It happened that a very ambitious *chia* head expressed his desire to have a business cooperation with our student-investigators. Our students refused politely but nevertheless we were disliked. Another incident occurred when our senior students forgot to bid farewells to our villagers. This fault was naturally ours.

Far more serious than these two incidents was the one when we failed to make sufficient contribution to the funeral of a villager. The

3:Chao E-5 (1939-1941)1948 AF12 North China AF12

123 whole misunderstanding occurred in this way. During the traditional New Year festival we presented seasonal presents to the villagers. When we found needy cases in our investigation we usually helped them within our capacity. Also our students made presents to their acquaintances in the village on special occasions. But this time when the death occurred in a very poor family, the school principal and the village leaders promised the family that they would obtain a good sum from us as presents to the funeral but which was without our knowledge. When we failed this time to live up to their expectation, their reaction was very strong indeed. They scolded our investigators and threatened to discontinue their cooperation. We surely learned a good lesson from this incident. A strong warning was given our student-investigators and our "liaison officer", the school principal, not to make any promise to villagers without our knowledge.

Naturally we had to offer compensation to our villagers in order to calm down their emotions and to restore the necessary cooperation. Many conferences were held with the village leaders. Finally, we agreed to subsidize a little sum every month in providing medicines for the curing of minor illnesses. Also we secured the cooperation of the university medical office to extend to the villagers its services. But so far very few villagers have taken advantage of this. With this agreement, the whole incident was closed and now it has been already forgotten by the villagers.

Except for these incidents in its beginning, the second year was a very happy one indeed. Our investigators freely mixed with the villagers. During the winter recess of 1940-41, these students lived among the village folks. They brought their own water from the village wells and cooked their own food. They entertained the villagers and so the villagers reciprocated. It happened that the traditional New Year festival fell in this winter recess. Our investigators actually *kowtowed* to the villagers. Naturally the villagers reciprocated. Our investigators were very much liked by the villagers. Indeed, one house-wife even tried to have one of our male-investigators marry a girl she knew.

121 The subjects covered in the second year included the physical structure of the village, the village temple, the "four sacred families", a case study of a farm family, duck-raising in the village, agricultural implements, school census and credit cooperatives, with the latter by a student of Economics.

3:Chao E-5 (1939-1941)1948 AF12 North China AF12

123

With our third year just begun, very little can be said except that our relations with the villagers are growing more intimate. Our investigators are very frequently invited by the villagers to have lunch with them. Subjects under investigation include nutritional relationship, belief in "wind and water", visits from and to friends and relatives outside the village, time keeping and the changing conception of time, house ownership, and the making of genealogical tables.

Our investigations have been largely limited to the activities of the P'ing-chiao-tsun folks. Their activities may, however, take place outside the village boundary and they have relations with peoples outside the village. In order to have clear pictures of their activities, our investigators have to follow them. For instance, in the study of duck-raising, our investigator followed the operator to the market-places in the city. Whenever deaths in other villages came to our knowledge, we sent investigators to the place for careful observation. We have extended our areas whenever necessary and opportune to do so.

It is not perhaps out of place to mention two general points of methodological interest in the present note. It seems to us from our experiences that the key problem in our investigation is communication with the villagers. Generally speaking, our investigators and the village folks live in the same Peiping linguistic area, but our life is so different from theirs that we may attach different meanings to the same words. Furthermore, because of differences in life experience, we and the villagers actually have different vocabularies. In this connection, we had been very fortunate indeed to associate ourselves with the principal of the village school who is literally marginal to our culture and the culture of the village folks. It is a very slow process to us indeed to relate the vocabularies of the village folks to their activities. But the problem does not end here. If our study is to be scientific at all, the communications of the village folks as well as their activities have to be objectified in some measurable units. Regarding this, we have only a humble beginning.

Of equal importance and highly relating to communication is the control of the personality element of our investigators. It seems to us that in sociological investigations, personalities are in interaction. While the method of participation observation is a very useful one, it may be too much in the direction of participation when the observer and the observed are in intimate interaction. In the interaction of personalities in an investigational situation, it is very difficult indeed

3:Chao E-5 (1939-1941)1948 AF12 North China AF12

123 to keep the two processes of participation and observation well balanced. In this connection, it is also very interesting to note that specific investigators are attracted to specific villagers. This attraction lies deep into their personality traits.

Before this note is concluded, one word may be added. While this is written, our field work is still in process. The present paper can be therefore taken only as a preliminary review. It is hoped, however, that it may serve as an introduction to the specialized papers which will appear in later issues of the *Journal*. The present paper is written also because we wish to have a chance to reflect on the work which was done in the last two years. Our work will be highly profited by comments from the social science public.

APPENDIX II: A NOTE ON POST-WAR DEVELOPMENT

122 The war came to an end on August 15, 1945, and the University reopened on its campus on October 10 of the same year. The principal of the village school came to inquire whether our research could be restored. I was then very much occupied with teaching and other work, and regretted very much that we could not resume our field work immediately but assured him that he would be informed of our decision in a few weeks' time. During the academic year of 1945-46 we paid three visits to the village, twice with two graduates of the Department of Sociology who were field workers there before the war, and once with an addition of an American student who was interested in sociology and just released from military service. In these three visits we were very warmly welcomed by our old friends, the villagers.

In the late summer of 1946, when the University in Chengtu rejoined those of us in Peiping, field work began to be resumed in a very small way. At first, a senior student went to the field. He was new to the village and was taken there by our assistant. He stayed on campus but made frequent trips to the village. It did not take a long time for him to get acquainted with the people of the village and he was soon able to concentrate on the problem of agricul-
121 tural laborers. A second senior student went to the field in January, 1947. He had visited the village in his junior year before the war, and it did not take much time for him to renew his personal acquaintances with the villagers. He finally concentrated on the problem

3:Chao E-5 (1939-1941)1948 AF12 North China AF12

of education of village children. The field of village politics in action was taken up by our assistant and another senior student. The work had not been completed when both of them left the university in 1947, but from their record of observation, we began to understand the process of struggle for power among ambitious individuals in the administrative district where our village is located.

One interesting point might be noted in connection with the method of investigation. As social studies are largely a matter of interaction of the observer and the group observed, the individuals whom the observer has most contact with have very much to do with the records of observation of the investigator. The difference between our first contacts with the village in the pre-war days, and later in the post-war days, is that whereas in the former, we had to depend upon our "liaison man", the school principal, in the latter, we are in direct contact with the villagers. After many years of absence, the nature of the first contact is important in the fact that the villagers are conscious that we are their friends, directly intimate and personal and not indirectly through the school principal. We have very little difficulty in approaching any family in the village, and our contact may thus not be unnecessarily conditioned by an intermediary. If contacts have to be conducted with the assistance of a liaison man, friends and enemies of his would be, though unintentionally, also ours, at least we would be so regarded by the villagers. Many sociological and anthropological field workers have not observed this principle and their studies are necessarily biased to that extent.

The most noticeable changes in the village on our first revisit, were the new faces we met on the streets. During the interval of four years, children had grown into young boys and girls. When we went into homes of villagers, we also noted the absence of some of our old acquaintances, as well as the presence of new faces. A couple of aged persons passed away during the war years. Quite a number of girls had grown up and had left to be married. Naturally, about the same number of young married women had come in. These are the natural events in the social metabolism of a community.

After a closer observation, we could hardly avoid the impression of a general economic dilapidation in many village homes. The reduction in the number of ducks and chickens was very noticeable. One of the two duck-raising families was out of business. The family could hardly find sufficient means for the minimum subsistence. But certain families were quite prosperous, and had at least maintained

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12

121 group loyalty and purely local interest and activity, might not be a means of gaining a more fundamental understanding of the chaotic conditions incident to the transformation of this nation into a new economic and political unity. Such knowledge might also throw some light on how the inevitable fusion of Eastern and Western cultural values might more harmoniously be brought about.

It is hoped that this study of one of these local groupings of ancient Cathay, namely, the guilds, may contribute in some measure to this more fundamental understanding of age-long Chinese culture and of the process of social change now taking place.

• 123 The strength as well as the weakness of this study is its indirect character. It reproduces the frank and truthful reports of the guildsmen themselves, invaluable in any accurate description of these organizations. Of equal importance, however, is the detailed first-hand observation of the activities of the guildsmen. Such a further study could best be made by Chinese investigators trained in scientific research technique, who would not meet the suspicion and misunderstanding which a Westerner would encounter. Should this preliminary investigation lead to further research of this kind, its primary object will have been accomplished.

000 I am especially indebted to my former student Hung-Chun Chang, and to his uncle, the scholar-priest, whose many interviews and reports have supplied the information upon which much of this study is based. Mr. Sidney D. Gamble has materially helped, first by his early study of the Peking guilds to which we have constantly referred, next by generously allocating two of his research staff to spend a summer on our project, and more recently by permitting the reproduction of his own description of a meeting of the Blind Guild. Mention should be made also of the work of my colleagues in the Department of Sociology of Yenching Uni-

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12

125 The questions covered the following points:[1]

I. Introduction, including the name of the guild, the character of its business, the location of its head office, and its officers
II. The purpose in founding the guild
III. The history of the guild
IV. Membership
V. Officers
VI. Meetings
VII. Income
VIII. Apprentice system
IX. Functions of the guild
X. Relations of the individual guild to other guilds and other organizations
XI. Discipline
XII. Charity
XIII. Religion
XIV. General conditions of the guild at present

(2) The original questionnaire was put into Chinese by a capable Chinese scholar and afterwards was carefully corrected by Mr. Franklin Lee, a native of Tung Hsien, a town fifteen miles east of Peking. Mr. Lee was selected because he was a native of the district and therefore able to use terms clearly understood by those living in Peking.

(3) The questionnaire was printed in large Chinese type.

• 123 125 (4) The investigation was carried out by three able, trained Chinese, in the following manner: Mr. Hung Chun Chang,[2] a graduate of Yenching University, took the responsibility for securing the information from the head men or important officials of each guild. Mr. Chang is the nephew of a priest in a well-known Confucian temple of the Southern City of Peking known as Ching Chung Miao.

[1] For full questionnaire, see Appendix, pp. 251-256.

[2] A full description of Mr. Chang's qualifications is given on page 57.

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12

Many of the guilds hold their annual meetings in this temple. Mr. Jun Shan Chiao,[1] the priest, was familiar with the proceedings of the guilds and was held responsible for many of the preparations for their meetings and ceremonies. In March, 1926, in company with Mr. Chang, the writer called on Mr. Chiao at the Temple and requested his cooperation in this study. The general plan was described to Mr. Chiao and he readily consented to cooperate with us. The fact that the writer had been his nephew's teacher and that his nephew fully understood the object of the investigation evidently quite satisfied Mr. Chiao and he showed neither curiosity as to why we were studying the guilds nor suspicion regarding the enterprise. The priest knew of the writer's personal interest in his nephew's future education in America, and the very pleasant chat regarding the guilds was concluded with a discussion of ways and means. Mr. Chiao then showed us around the old Temple, taking us through a large theatre with a gallery at the rear and on two sides, and having a stone slab floor. We inspected the large stage where the plays are given to the "Sacred Masters" or the supposed founders of the guilds. Certain locked rooms where records of the guilds are kept were pointed out.

(5) Mr. Chang secured from his uncle introductions, either by telephone or by letter, to prominent men and officials of the guilds to be studied. He selected organizations whose officers were known personally to his uncle. He called on these men, taking the questionnaire with him and making notes of replies. In many cases several interviews were necessary. With insight into difficulties that might arise through suspicion on the part of members of the guilds as to the object of his study, Mr. Chang concealed the fact that he was securing this information for a Westerner.

[1] A full description of Mr. Chiao's characteristics is given on pp. 56, 57.

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12

128 accurate description of guild organizations and functionings as they exist today in Peking.

127 Partly because no old guild records are available, historical material in this paper, although abundant, is by no means comprehensive. This fact, however, is not the handicap which it might be were we dealing with institutions which have already disappeared. Although no doubt a complete historical picture would throw much light on the present operation and functioning of the guilds, it is not so essential in this case because there is every reason to suppose that they are now functioning very much as they have functioned since ancient times. There are indications, it is true, that of late the ancient structure is beginning to crumble. But in a city like Peking, which is relatively little affected by foreign trade and manufacturing, enough remains to enable us to see clearly the outlines of the ancient organizations.

121 This paper will not deal extensively with the transformation of the guilds. It is relatively more important to understand the nature of these ancient social structures than the many modifications now taking place. Ten years from now much more material will be available on the dissolution of the guilds, but it may then be difficult to determine the original nature of the organizations. The changes cannot be evaluated except by reference to the original structure. No effective effort to conserve the best of the guild life can be made unless we know the nature of the original social values and attitudes manifested.

• 123 The method used is particularly adapted to a study of this ancient group life. The investigators who covered most of the guilds were young men of modern education, able to give a critical estimate of the facts recorded, but they had not been abroad, were not "Westernized" and were not familiar with Western economic life. These young men had the best possible introduction, that of the friendly scholar-priest with

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12

whom the guild officials were acquainted. Many of these officials were interviewed several times. It must be remembered that time is not considered so valuable to these old guildsmen as to the heads of Western business concerns. A chat with the nephew of the priest who prepares their "god's feast" each year, or with the nephew's friend who had an introduction from the same priest, would *a priori* be calculated to draw out the facts "as they saw them." There would be no motive for deception and no suspicion because of the introduction. Unlike the West, there is no danger of revealing trade secrets to rival firms. Each group has a practical monopoly in its field, hence there is no danger of the competitor profiting by the facts divulged. It is also highly improbable that these guildsmen had ever been similarly interviewed regarding the guilds. They were not questionnaire-hardened.

The discussion of the future of the guilds is based on inferences derived from the guildsmen's reports, or on material obtained from sources other than the questionnaire.

E. The Distinction Between Verified Facts and Inferences Drawn from these Facts

In the following discussion there are two types of matter dealt with: (1) facts derived from the inductive study of these guilds or from other creditable sources; and (2) opinion or conjecture based on these facts. In the former case statements will frequently be made without reference to the exact source. Opinions or inferences derived from these facts will in every case be given as opinion merely. Unqualified statements may be assumed to be based on the material in hand.

F. Money Exchange Rates

Throughout this study the sign $ will indicate Chinese, not American, dollars. When the American dollar is men-

5: Tao E-5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12

123 age none can fail to get an idea, however crude it may be, of this wide-spread doctrine. In their talk with the families and by way of explanation, the investigators may have to point out that inquiries of this kind would disclose certain facts that challenge the attention of social workers and they may also have to express their views that these inquiries would, in time, lead to improvement and reform of the living and working conditions of the labouring class, but to the people under investigation these utterances would sound very much like what they have heard about communism. In fact, in the course of the present inquiry, an investigator was once asked if she was not an agent sent by the communists! While these people would have nothing to fear from the communists, living on the verge of poverty as they always are, the rigorous measures taken by the authorities in the anti-red campaign, however, have warned them to be careful and not to come into contact with them. Under such circumstances, it is but natural that the people under investigation are usually disinclined to receive the investigator and take her into confidence.

There is, however, another fact which has greatly facilitated the inquiry. It has been a usual practice in Peking for various philanthropic institutions to distribute alms in the winter to destitute families, while police authorities assist them by making a rough survey of the poverty-stricken areas and sending them a list of deserving families for their reference. Thus, many families which took the investigator as an agent of the police would gladly receive her with open arms and furnished her with every information she wanted. It seems that under such conditions the investigator would find no difficulty in obtaining information, but at the same time she must be aware of the fact that the information thus furnished might not be entirely reliable, for with the hope of receiving alms, the family might purposely distort the accounts of its daily life. Consequently, unless the investigator was careful and keenly observant, she might overlook any intentional falsification of the report which the families under investigation supplied to her each day.

5: Tao . E-5 . (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12

It is not possible to discuss at this place all the problems which arise in a family budget inquiry in this country. Suffice it to say that there are many obstacles and pitfalls, for which those making the inquiry have to look out. The path along which the inquiry has to be conducted may not be at all smooth, nor, however, is it intraversable. From the limited experience which the present inquiry has yielded, it may be concluded that it is essential to let the families under investigation have an intelligent understanding of the nature of the inquiry. Only through such an understanding can the families be expected to co-operate with the investigator and help her bring the inquiry to a successful end. It may therefore be urged that the central problem of the inquiry lies in the choice of competent investigators. With investigators who know how to make clear to the families the nature of their work and to win their confidence, the success of the major part of the inquiry may be assured.

In the selection of the investigator, one has to consider not only the competence of the person but also the nature of the work. At the same time, sex is also an important factor which must not be overlooked, as, generally speaking, different sexes are suited to different vocations. It may be safely stated that in the case of the family budget inquiry which necessitates daily visit to various homes, woman investigators are greatly preferred. In support of this contention, the following reasons may be advanced. Firstly, each household considers its home to be a sacrosanct place where outsiders are generally barred from entrance. This is particularly true in Peking as practically all working families live in a single room which serves a variety of purposes, such as for rest, living, eating and sleeping. Now to have a man, a stranger to the family, come into the room every day would create a very embarrassing situation to the female members of the family. Secondly, the man folks in these families are generally out at work, and it is generally the women who stay in and receive the investigator day by day. Thirdly, it is generally the female member of the family who handles the family income and is mainly responsible for the household

5: Tao E-5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12

123 economy. At any rate, she alone could tell the minute details of her daily expenses. Fourthly, the nature of the investigation being such as requires constancy, patience and diligence, there is no doubt that the woman as a rule excels the man in these qualities.

124 Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the daily recording of accounts is essentially a routine work. One may perhaps take up the work with zeal and interest at the start, because it gives her a chance to meet people of a different class, to probe into their conditions of life and to discover things which she has never experienced before, but as time goes on and the work becomes routinized, her enthusiasm for it would dwindle. Simultaneously there is often found a corresponding slackening of interest on the part of the people under investigation. Cross-examined day after day with an almost invariable series of questions, they soon begin to get tired of the presence of the investigators. Like the long distance race, inquiry of this kind is often the most difficult when it comes to a later, and particularly the last stage. Thus, unless the families know how to keep their own accounts and find interest in the work, this serious limitation to the inquiry seems to be inevitable.

So far we have dwelt in particular on the problems that are involved in the family budget inquiry of the Chinese working class. For the educated and highly enlightened class, however, budgetary inquiry seems to be much less difficult, since the task of recording the daily accounts may be entirely put into their own hands, after certain instructions having been given them, and consequently both the question of selecting the investigator and the bother and difficulty that usually attend the daily visit to families will not arise so formidably as in the other case. Given a well-designed account-book and provided with detailed directions, an educated person will, as a rule, be able to fill it with accuracy and completeness. Thus, at least, the book-keeping part of the work of the inquiry is relegated to the families and what remains to those who conduct the inquiry will

7: Gamble S-5 (1926-1927) 1933 AF12 North China AF12

ably average sample, the number in the different income groups seems to be sufficiently large to give a complete picture of the average expenditure of the families in the lower income groups; and, in the higher income groups, to provide sufficient data to show clearly how a change in family income affects the size of the family and the distribution of its expenditure. 124

In return for the keeping of their accounts, the families with small incomes were paid a dollar a month. Where the income was larger, presents given at Chinese New Year and the Spring and Autumn Festivals, the fifth of the Fifth Moon and the fifteenth of the Eighth Moon, seemed a better way of recognizing the help which had been given. A basket of fruit, cakes and tea was the usual gift, some of these costing $2 and others $3, the more expensive being given to the families with the larger incomes. The dollar a month given to the poorer families was entered on the family accounts since it was part of their money income, but the presents of fruit, tea and cake were not included. These gifts may have reduced slightly the household expenditure; but, for the most part, they were not the type of food the families would buy if they were to choose how the money should be spent. A few families reported some other small gifts of food, but no attempt was made to estimate the value of these gifts, and they too were omitted from the accounts. 123

An account-book of some twenty pages, similar to the one shown in Figure 1, was given to each family every month. These provided space for recording the daily receipts from different sources, and the daily expenditure for each of the many items bought by the family. 125

8: Lin E-5 (1927)1928 AF12 North China AF12

the purpose of profit-making but is a part of the gigantic process of industrialization of this country. In other words, whereas most of the Chinese industrialists usually start their enterprises with a lack of the necessary experience and knowledge which their work demands, those in connection with the factories under consideration are well equipped in both. Thus, if the former were blindly drawn to industrial pursuits, the latter entered into the field with a full consciousness of their knowledge and ability to adjust themselves and their activities to the environment. The difference between the two is certainly worthy of attention.

Secondly, the labour movement has in recent years begun to loom large on the horizon of the industrial world of this country, in spite of the stringent measures aganst it heretofore adopted by the militarist authorities and in spite of the oppressive policies pursued by factory owners or managers. In fact, the movement is gaining momentum at an amazing rate. It must be understood that if on the one hand, as is frequently alleged, a good deal of labour unrest has been due to agitation or extraneous pressure from radicals and communists, none can deny that on the other there are also genuine reasons for the dissatisfaction of the labourers and that their complaints, whatever they may be, must be looked into. As the ancient sage, Hsun-tze, says, "Worms breed only in things which have already become rotten," so no labour troubles could flourish unless the soil is already fertile for its growth and development. Now this is precisely what the managers of the two factories have anticipated and endeavoured to forestall. They believe that labour is a primary requisite in production and therefore it must be accorded due consideration. Our description of their welfare work forms an excellent illustration of the extent to which action has been taken by them in this respect.

That the managers of the two factories have always been eager to find means to improve the lot of their workers may also be found in their desire to study the needs of the workers. Thus, during his stay at the Chiu Ta Salt Refinery from March to June 1927, our investigator was afforded every facility by the authorities of the two factories to conduct his study. So long as they were not of a

8: Lin E-5 (1927)1928 AF12 North China AF12

nature which would divulge trade secrets, all the archives of the two factories were open for his inspection. He was allowed to live close to the workers' dormitory, to mingle freely with them, and to take part in their social activities. And last, but not the least, the investigator was asked constantly and in particular after the completion of his study to make recommendations on extending and improving their welfare work. Such a solicitous spirit shown for the well-being of their workers, it must be admitted, is but rarely met with in factories in this country.

Readers will find the conditions of living of the workers fully dealt with in the different chapters of this book. Whether the living standard of the workers is adequate will, perhaps, be viewed differently by many, but, at any rate, it may be admitted that it can by no means be compared with that in the West, particularly with that in the United States. Nevertheless, in a review of Chinese labour conditions, it seems necessary, first of all, to give due allowance to the general low standard of living of the Chinese. Now if the majority of our people are living in a poverty-stricken state, and are visited periodically with natural and more frequently with social and political catastrophes, how can it be possible to expect the industrial worker alone to enjoy an abundant life? Indeed one finds in the modern cities of this country, a semblance of opulence and extravagant living such as is usually found in industrially developed nations, but we need not go far afield before we discover tens and hundreds of thousands of people living in misery and privation. What about the lot of the teeming millions of agricultural workers in the country who are compelled to lead an existence, precarious and pitiably poor? This, be it observed, is not to say that the worker should be satisfied with his present lot, and that the employer may treat him in any way he likes. What is here maintained is that every advance in the worker's well-being must be preceded or accompanied by an uplifting of the general living standard and that his material welfare cannot be treated as a phenomenon in isolation.

Again, it seems necessary, in the course of our discussion, to remember that there are also considerations other than labour.

8: Lin E-5 (1927)1928 AF12 North China AF12

12 their relatives or friends. It may be safely said that possible errors are thus reduced to a minimum.

There were 556 workers in the Chiu Ta Factory, and of this number, 420 were resident workers. Excluding the newcomers from whom it was impossible to obtain their income and expenditure for the last year, only 306 resident workers fell within the scope of our investigation. And from this number, 86 have been chosen and included in our sample. As a whole, the sample may be considered to reflect the general condition of the entire body of the Chiu Ta resident workers whose length of service was upwards of a year. As to the non-resident workers, 80 out of 136 families were chosen at random. But in the course of analysing these 80 schedules, only 61 families have been found serviceable for our purpose,

II. DIFFICULTIES OF THE INVESTIGATION

123 Explanation of Purpose.—In conducting a social investigation in China, it is necessary, first of all, to make known to the persons under investigation the purpose of the work and also the organization we represent, in order to avoid suspicion. To do this, however, is no easy task. First, the very title of our organization, "The Social Research Department of the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture" is a long and unintelligible epithet to them. Terms like "Education and Culture" and "Social Research" have to be fully explained. When the meaning of the terms has been duly conveyed, they seriously questioned the motives of collecting informations which seem to infringe upon their privacy of life. They also doubted as to what good such an investigation would produce. All these and other related questions had to be answered to their satisfaction.

Having made clear the nature of the organization whence he came, the investigator next had to explain to them his working terms like "cost of living," "working conditions," "surplus and deficit," etc. which are usually mere jargons to the workers and must be interpreted to them in their own language. It should be

8: Lin E-5 (1927)1928 AF12 North China AF12

acknowledged that had it not been for the help of the administrative staff and the assistance of some of the enthusiastic and intelligent workers in the factory in explaining these terms to the majority of the factory hands, our investigation could not have been conducted as satisfactorily as it was. 123

Difficulties of Interview.—Another difficulty was encountered in the course of interviewing the workers. The interview could be done only during leisure hours of the workers, but such chances were often found rare. Night workers had to rest during the day, while day workers had to remain on duty. Even those who were off duty were not infrequently absent from their rooms, for they might be out. The investigator was so often disappointed to find none of them in the dormitory, although, at other times, he might come across a big group sitting and chatting in the dormitory room, all of whom, however, had already heen interviewed! To overcome these difficulties, personal interviews with night workers were arranged in the afternoon just before they resumed work, while interviews with day workers were usually carried on in the evenings. As there were changes of shifts every week in the factory work, it was found possible to secure information from both day and night workers when arrangements were made beforehand. 124

As has been noted, the workers were often found unable to understand the purpose of the investigation, much less to appreciate it. Before the investigator could obtain answers from them, it was necessary, therefore, to work up their interest in the subject by means of casual conversation. As soon as they showed some indication that they seemed to understand the purpose of our investigation, then questioning began. The investigation was generally conducted in such a way as to make the interviews extremely informal, appearing more like chatting than anything else.

The investigation of the families of the non-resident workers was even more difficult than that of resident workers. Whereas the latter all lived in the dormitory and could be easily located, the houses of the former were, however, all scattered about. In

8: Lin E-5 (1927)1928 AF12 North China AF12

be increased, but at the same time cart pulling would secure for him a goodly amount of "salt bonus." The change in the cost of living of such a worker is sometimes immediate and sometimes comes after a period of one or two months. To obtain absolutely correct figures of the yearly cost of living from such a worker is not only impossible for the investigator but also complicated enough for the worker himself, for we could hardly expect him to remember all his expenses in detail, while his economic conditions changed several times a year. It should, therefore, be stated that what we are presenting in this book is but a conservative estimate of the worker's average expenses for the preceding twelve months.

Question of Social Respect.—Traditions and customs in China present a peculiar problem to the social investigator. The Chinese people are usually reserved, though often keenly sensitive to the treatment they receive. Whatever their station in life their dignity is to be respected at all times. It is, therefore, often a delicate matter to obtain reliable information from the worker without infringing too much upon his privacy or causing displeasure. In asking such questions as the age of a girl, value of one's property, debts incurred, articles pawned, etc. it is not only distasteful to the informant but also quite embarrassing for the investigator. In the case of re-investigation and confirmation, where the same questions had to be asked once over again, the situation was particularly delicate, for it naturally revealed our skeptical attitude, if not, our entire disbelief in the truthfulness of the previous answers of the informants.

III. LIMITATION OF OUR DATA

Business Secrecy.—It is generally known that no business man is willing to give out certain facts of his business or the condition of his factory. And, of course, the factory under investigation is no exception to the rule. Inasmuch as the aim of our investigation is merely to find out the cost of living of the workers, only a general description of the factory will suffice